

## **2002 Ralph N. Kleps Awards Winners**

### **Program Descriptions**

#### ***Category 1: Courts With 2-6 AJPs***

**Court:** Superior Court of Amador County

**Project:** Amador Becomes Its Own Employer

**Contact:** Ms. Rachelle Agatha, Executive Officer

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**Amador Becomes Its Own Employer:** Superior Court of Amador County  
When the court became its own employer July 1, 2001, it successfully absorbed all fiscal and administrative functions from the county in a rigorous one-year project. Without additional funding resources, the court established a strategic plan and implemented all phases of the project in one year—absorbing accounting, payroll, human resources, and procurement functions. The court became an employer in the eyes of the federal and state governments, opened a bank account, and researched and implemented fiscal systems. It also created fiscal and personnel policies and procedures, new classification plans, and has completed labor negotiations.

**Court:** Superior Court of San Benito County

**Project:** Court to Community: The Consequences of Teen

**Contact:** Mr. Alex Calvo, Executive Officer

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**Court to Community: The Consequences of Teen Parenting,** Superior Court of San Benito County

The Court to Community: Teen Consequences of Teen Parenting project is an outreach effort designed to inform teenagers about the legal and financial consequences when a child is born and the parents are (a) not living together and (b) not financially independent and/or (c) not yet 18. The objective is to reduce unplanned pregnancies and births where the children of teens become dependent on family members or public assistance. The project is an interactive presentation in which court staff (judges,

commissioners, staff attorneys) and family law counsel take on roles of court commissioner and family law facilitator in a skit performed with members of the student audience. The skit includes a mock interview between a teen father and a facilitator, and a mock courtroom hearing. Feedback evaluations from approximately 500 students over the last three years indicate a high level of effectiveness, as well as sincere appreciation for the court's effort.

***Category 2: Courts With 7-19 AJP's***

**Court:** Superior Court of Nevada County

**Project:** Public Law Center

**Contact:** Mr. Kent Vanderschuit, Director, Public Law Center

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**Public Law Center:** Superior Court of Nevada County

The court established a Public Law Center to assist the growing number of self-represented individuals involved in the court system and improve access to justice for all members of the community. This legal self-help center provides information to individuals who are not represented by an attorney and who may have to navigate through court procedures on a number of legal issues such as adoption, conservatorship, guardianship, name changes, unlawful detainer, traffic, appeals, civil harassment, neighbor disputes, and jury service. The center provides self-help information to the public in the form of books, brochures, online research, online links to other courts, computer forms, videos, forms packets with instructions, and lists of alternate community resources.

**Court:** Superior Court of Yolo County

**Project:** Juvenile Violence Court

**Contact:** Ms. Kathleen M. White, Executive Officer

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**Juvenile Violence Court:** Superior Court of Yolo County

The Juvenile Violence Court (JVC) is a collaborative effort between the superior court and the Yolo County Probation Department that has resulted in an effective and cost-efficient response to reducing juvenile violence. Fifteen at-risk juveniles with violent

histories are chosen for each session. Juveniles appear monthly in court, where the specially assigned probation officer reports on each minor's progress or missteps. As part of the program each minor is also required to attend field trips to the California Youth Authority Diversion/Reality Check and to San Quentin's Squire Program for Minors at Risk. Throughout the program minors keep personal journals. Each minor's school attendance is monitored daily, as well as other delinquent behavior at home, and drug usage (random drug testing) or gang affiliations (rooms are periodically searched for gang paraphernalia). All minors are required to attend two hours of anger control classes for 12 weeks, as well as peer meetings where a facilitator discusses topics such as conflict resolution, self-esteem building, and the roots of violence and racism.

***Category 3: Courts With 20–49 AJP's***

**Court:** Superior Court of San Joaquin County

**Project:** In The Interest of Justice Video

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**“In The Interest of Justice” Video:** Superior Court of San Joaquin County  
“In the Interest of Justice” is a cultural awareness video with accompanying written materials produced by the Superior Court of San Joaquin County. The video seeks to educate both the bench and court staff about the Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese cultures by illustrating how cultural differences can clash in the courtroom. For example, Southeast Asian formalities, such as diverting eyes from people of authority as a way of showing respect, can be misunderstood by American judges and judicial staff.

**Court:** Superior Court of Sonoma County

**Project:** CLETS Interface

**Contact:** Ms. Donna Gomes, Director, Court Technical Service Division

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**CLETS Interface:** Superior Court of Sonoma County  
The court developed a computer software program to allow automatic electronic transmission of restraining order information from the superior court case management system to the Department of Justice's California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) automated computer system. Information entered into the state CLETS

system is accessible to all law enforcement agencies in the state. The information it contains relates to terms and conditions of domestic violence restraining orders, harassment restraining orders, elder abuse, workplace violence, and criminal protective orders.

***Category 4: Courts With 50+ AJP's***

**Court:** Superior Court of Orange County

**Project:** Self-Help Forms Printing Kiosk Project

**Contact:** Anthony A. Thompson, Manager, Court Management Services

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**Self-Help Forms Printing Kiosk:** Superior Court of Orange County

The court installed self-service, high-speed kiosks at all seven of the court's justice center locations. The touch screen kiosk allows the public instant access, at no cost, to all of the court's approximately 575 preprinted forms for civil, small claims, family law, probate, and criminal matters. Each time the user selects a form, the kiosk accesses the California Courts Web site for the statewide form as well as the local court's public Web server for local forms. This ensures that the user always sees and prints the latest version of the form.

**Court:** Superior Court of Riverside County

**Project:** Court Certificate Program

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**Court Certificate Program:** Superior Court of Riverside County

To enhance court staff's skills and performance through continuing professional education and development, the court created a Court Certificate Program. The program provides an opportunity for full-time, permanent employees to develop their professional and personal skills and build self-esteem. Eligible employees agree to a minimum two-year commitment to attend internal court training courses (held during work hours) and classes at a community college (on their own personal time). The curriculum includes classes in ethics, business, technology, communications, law, and customer service. Staff that have completed this program are given special consideration when applying for promotions and advancement.

**Court:** Superior Court of San Diego County

**Project:** “On My Honor” Court Education Program for California Kids

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**On My Honor:** Superior Court of San Diego County

On My Honor was conceived by Judge Richard G. Cline of the Superior Court of San Diego County, who collaborated with a local teacher to develop the teacher’s guide and numerous lesson plans and activities. On My Honor also includes a visit to the court and participation in a mock trial. The program teaches youth about the legal system, the courts, and the administration of justice. More than 1,900 students from several school districts have participated in the program since its inception in 2000, and judges from several divisions of the superior court have been trained in its presentation. Accolades about the program received from students include their expressions of thanks for the opportunity to learn how the reality of the justice system differs from television portrayals.

#### *Category 5: Appellate Courts*

**Court:** Court of Appeal, First Appellate District

**Project:** Appellate Mediation Program

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**Appellate Mediation Program:** Court of Appeal, First Appellate District

The mediation program developed by the First Appellate District of the Court of Appeal resolves litigation early in the appellate process, before parties incur the cost of preparing briefs. By initiating the mediation process, the court affords parties an opportunity for settlement that they may not take on their own. A court-trained mediator is assigned to a case based on his or her mediation skills and subject matter expertise. The mediation process is informal and confidential and maximizes parties’ participation in settling their dispute.